

World

TERRORISM

"Police! Marvelous!"*In a dramatic raid, Italian commandos free a kidnaped U.S. general*

28 JAN 82

At precisely 11:28 a.m. last Thursday, an unmarked van carrying ten special agents of Italy's Central Operative Security Nucleus, a tough antiterrorist squad known colloquially as the "leatherheads" for the tight-fitting leather hoods worn during special operations, pulled up behind a modern eight-story apartment building in Padua. Police had quietly cordoned off the Via Pindemonte, the normally busy street out front, and shoppers in the supermarket on the ground floor were startled to find themselves locked inside for their own safety. Then the commandos rushed inside the building, carrying machine guns and dressed in blue jeans, bulletproof vests and masks to prevent identification by terrorists.

As police outside started up a bulldozer to cover the sounds of what was to come, the squad rushed quickly to the second-floor apartment of Emanuela Frascella, 21, a history student at the University of Venice and a Red Brigades terrorist. One commando opened the steel-reinforced door of the apartment with a skeleton key, and his colleagues burst inside. In the hallway they encountered Giovanni Ciucci, 32, a Red Brigades member, who had heard the key turn in the lock and was rushing, pistol in hand, to investigate. Before he had a chance to fire, one of the leatherheads knocked him flat with a karate chop, and the others scrambled down the hallway.

In a room on the right they found the leader of the terrorist cell, Antonio Savasta, 27, standing next to a pup tent pitched in the middle of the room. Inside the tent, chained to a cot, was a shoeless, bearded man in a dark blue jogging suit. Savasta was holding a silencer-equipped pistol to the man's head. Before Savasta could pull the trigger, however, a commando hit him from behind with the butt of his machine gun and knocked him to the floor.

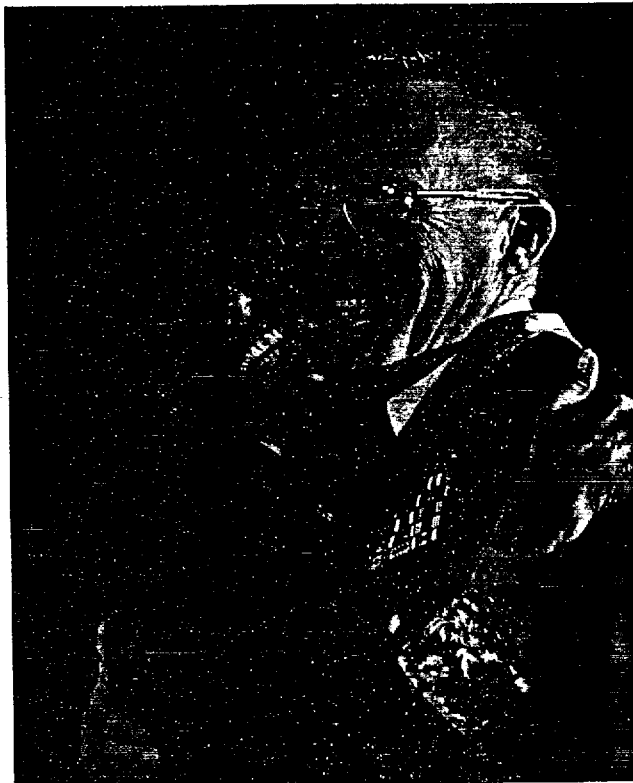
The rest of the squad continued to the rear of the five-room apartment, where they found the three remaining terrorists: Frascella, Savasta's girlfriend Emilia Libera, 26, and Cesare di Lenardo, 22. The three put their hands up immediately. Not a shot had been fired. From the mo-

ment the leatherheads first entered the building, barely 90 seconds had elapsed.

Thus ended the 42-day captivity of U.S. Brigadier General James L. Dozier, 50, as well as the largest man hunt in Italian history. A dramatic and unexpected triumph, it was only the second time in the Red Brigades' decade-long reign of terror that one of the group's kidnaping

that he would be unable to identify his surroundings.

But Dozier, deputy chief of staff for logistics and administration and the highest ranking U.S. officer at NATO's Southern Europe land forces headquarters in Verona, recovered with remarkable speed. At Padua police headquarters, the Florida-born career soldier insisted, "I'm fine," and called his wife Judith in Frankfurt, where she was visiting her daughter Cheryl, 24, an Air Force second lieutenant. Then he called his boss, Admiral William J. Crowe, commander of NATO's Southern Region. Speaking by telephone to U.S. Ambassador Maxwell Rabb in Rome, Dozier recounted the final seconds before he was freed. Said he: "At the moment I was rescued, a gun was pointed at me and I didn't know whether that was my last moment. You must realize my feeling of relief when I was taken in hand by Italian authorities."



Dozier happily embraces Wife Judith after meeting the press

"On the receiving end of prayers, you sure as hell can feel it."

victims had been rescued by police.* Said a somewhat shaken Dozier to his Italian liberators: "Police! Marvelous!"

Indeed it was. Dozier, who had been abducted on Dec. 17 from his Verona apartment by Red Brigades members disguised as plumbers, seemed to be in a condition that was one part shock and two parts euphoria immediately after he was rescued. That was understandable. For six weeks he had been held hostage in the Padua apartment, apparently never leaving. He was often blindfolded, and his ears were stuffed with wax to ensure

*On June 5, 1975, Italian Industrialist Vittorio Gancia was freed by police during a raid on a Red Brigades hideout near Turin.

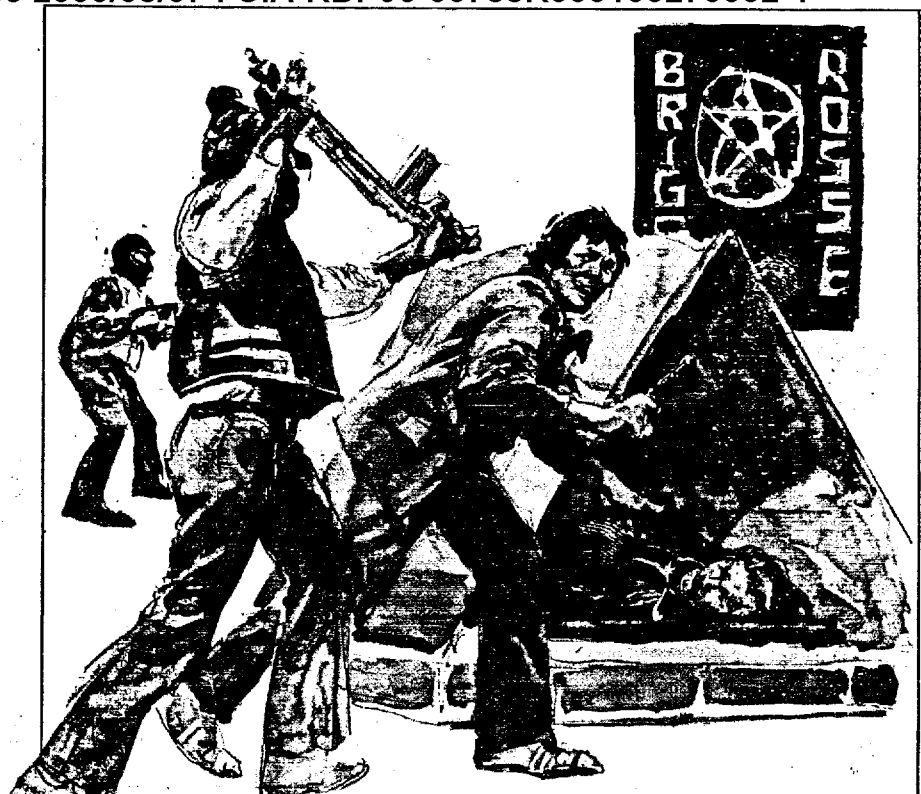
world for their love and their prayers."

The general echoed that sentiment at a no-questions press conference the next afternoon. He praised the Italian police effort for its "speed and precision," then added, "When you are on the receiving end of prayers, you sure as hell can feel it." He also presented Judith with a belated Christmas gift: a gold chain with a pendant of the Lion of St. Mark, his headquarters emblem.

News of Dozier's rescue spread rapidly. President Reagan was awakened by National Security Adviser William Clark at 6:50 a.m. Thursday, 40 minutes before he normally rises. Said the President later that day: "The same courage and resolve



Felled by a karate chop, Terrorist Giovanni Clucilles in hallway of the Padua apartment as the commandos move in to rescue Dozier



In the living room, Red Brigades Cell Leader Antonio Savasta hears the commotion and trains his pistol on the general, but is clobbered from behind by a member of the raiding squad

that James Dozier demonstrated on the battlefield in wartime have seen him through this new test with flying colors." Added Reagan, describing his own brief phone conversation with Dozier: "He sounded as if he'd just gone down to the corner for five minutes." Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger received a call from his Italian counterpart, Lelio Lagorio, who speaks little English. Weinberger, who speaks little Italian, broke the language barrier with an exultant "Magnifico!" Answered Lagorio happily: "Sì! Sì!" In Dozier's home town, Arcadia, Fla., (pop. 6,047), townspeople draped century-old oaks with yellow ribbons and declared a day of celebration in honor of their native son.

The Italians were especially jubilant at having cracked the case. Exulted Prime Minister Giovanni Spadolini: "General Dozier has been liberated. The soldier of a friendly nation has been returned to his loved ones." In Rome, Pope John Paul II expressed "relief and satisfaction" at the rescue. Spontaneous cheers echoed during a session of Parliament in Rome. Excited Italians dialed the emergency police number, 113, just to offer congratulations. The outcry put to rest a growing impression abroad that the Italian public had become inured to the country's seemingly perpetual terrorism. Summed up Oscar Mammi, a member of Parliament: "The liberation of Dozier represents an outstanding success in the fight against terrorism and reinforces the prestige of our nation."

The Italians had good cause for self-



At Padua police headquarters after rescue

congratulation. After years of impotent anguish, watching helplessly as terrorists kidnaped and killed prominent business and political leaders almost at will, the government had finally won a major victory against terrorism. There had been too many losses. In 1978 former Prime Minister Aldo Moro was found shot to death in a car trunk after nearly two months of imprisonment by the Red Brigades. Industrialist Giuseppe Taliercio was brutally murdered last year after his *brigatisti* captors had held him for 47 days. In all, three Red Brigades abductions have ended in death and a dozen or so in the victims' release.

This time, after a series of police arrests over the past year had depleted their front ranks, the militant Brigades faction apparently decided to reassert its strength with an especially bold gesture. For the first time, they kidnaped a non-Italian. It proved to be a mistake. Prodded by the U.S., the Italian government threw some 2,000 investigators on the case. The dragnet was a success. Besides freeing Dozier, the police netted between 60 and 70 suspected terrorists, discovered 16 of their hideaways and unearthed key documents and plans for future guerrilla actions. In its broad sweep, the police search managed an unprecedented penetration of the Red Brigades, an organization of a few hundred hard-core activists and several times that many sympathizers.

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police roadblocks and searches began producing arrests of both confirmed and suspected terrorists. Leads and clues proliferated, among them an unfortunate number of bogus tips and hoaxes. Four weeks ago, for instance, an anonymous call prompted police to drain a lake about 30 miles from Pescara on the Adriatic coast, where Dozier's body was supposed to have been dumped. But while Dozier endured the taunting leftist rhetoric of his captors, the case began to break open.

On Jan. 4, two suspected terrorists, Stefano Petrella and Ennio di Rocco, were arrested near Rome's famed Spanish Steps. Those arrests led to raids on three Rome apartments, where police turned up Brigades documents and weapons and ten more Red Brigades members, including Giovanni Senzani, a former criminologist who became leader of the Brigades' Rome column. Less than two weeks later, after a bank robbery in Siena, police arrested two members of an ultramilitant Red Brigades splinter group called *Prima Linea*, or Front Line. Those arrests in turn led to the discovery of a secret Rome hideout, which, remarkably, was used as a medical facility where terrorists wounded in police shootouts could come for emergency care. Soon afterward, police discovered another rich lode of *Prima Linea* documents and photos in a Naples safe house.

The national police, in conjunction with local anti-terrorist task forces and the Interior Ministry, sensed that they were getting close to Dozier. But ironically, their successes played only a minor role in finally locating him. A major drug bust in Verona last Wednesday seems to have yielded the final link to Dozier's whereabouts. Among those arrested in the raid was Paolo Galati, 22, brother of Michele Galati, who is currently in prison for terrorist acts. Sources said Galati's name had been mentioned by Stefano Petrella after that *brigatista's* arrest in Rome. Police flew Petrella to Padua to confront Paolo Galati. Somehow, that meeting led police to the apartment on Via Pindemonte. As early as Tuesday, the U.S. embassy was informed that some sort of action to rescue Dozier was imminent.

Police began moving in on the Via Pindemonte building early Thursday morning. A former plan for a nighttime raid on the apartment was rejected because streets in the partly commercial area would be too quiet then, and Dozier's captors might notice any unusual activity. At about 10 a.m., 28 police and unmarked cars surrounded the area. Half an hour later, members of the special

antiterrorist force took up their positions in the street, ready to intervene in case of trouble. Moments later, the truck carrying the ten leatherheads pulled up behind the building, and the raid was on.

Four of the five terrorists arrested were taken to an undisclosed location. Ciucci was rushed to a nearby hospital in serious condition after sustaining the karate blow in the hallway. All but Ciucci and Frascella, whose father is a respected Padua doctor, were well known to antiterrorist specialists. Indeed, Savasta and Libera were recently convicted in a Cagliari court and sentenced to prison *in absentia* for several bank robberies and their involvement in a 1980 shootout with police. In the apartment, police found large numbers of Red Brigades documents and the two slogan-filled posters that Dozier was



After the raid, police guard entrance to the Via Pindemonte building

A textbook operation: people talked and every lead was followed up.

forced to hold up for photos released during his captivity. The Red Brigades flag that Dozier stood before in the photos hung in the living room. Also discovered were pistols, plastic explosives, grenades and photocopying equipment for faked identity cards.

From the beginning the U.S. Department of Defense had supplied a team of counterterrorist experts to aid in the search for Dozier. The U.S. and Italian governments worked together closely, agreed not to negotiate with the terrorists and were both faithful to a news blackout, but the Americans played only a minor role in the operation. There is also little reason to believe that the \$1.6 million "reward" put up by anonymous donors was used to loosen the tongues of terrorist informers. Said an admiring U.S. official of the Italian police effort: "It was a textbook operation. They cracked the column, the people talked and they followed up every single lead." Added another American on the case: "It was just damn good police work."

Still, few in Italy believe they have seen the last of the Red Brigades. Both U.S. and Italian officials are concerned that the terrorists received at least some assistance from foreign radicals and Soviet-bloc governments. Indeed, a Brigades communiqué in December called for unity with the terrorist West German Red Army Faction, the violence-prone Irish Republican Army and ETA, Spain's militant Basque-separatist organization. A 188-page document issued later declared that in capturing Dozier the Red Brigades were making their struggle international. The tract seemed to lend credibility to the idea that the recent upsurge in attacks on U.S. military and diplomatic personnel around the world is a coordinated effort. In fact, Dozier was the fifth American official to fall prey to a terrorist threat since September 1981, when U.S.

General Frederick Kroesen miraculously escaped harm during a grenade attack on his car by unknown assailants near Heidelberg. Since then, two American diplomats, Christian Chapman in Paris and Ambassador Rabb in Rome, have been targets of apparent assassination attempts. Only two weeks ago, U.S. Military Attaché Lieut. Colonel Charles R. Ray was fatally gunned down outside his Paris apartment.

Officials of the Reagan Administration say they have "no direct evidence" of foreign involvement in Dozier's kidnapping. But they point out that Soviet-made weapons seized in the Jan. 9 Rome raid bore "certain modifications" that suggest they were funneled to the Red Brigades from Palestinian sources.

Moreover, the Americans suspect that "external" intelligence information was supplied to the Red Brigades in selecting targets.

Dozier may be able to shed some light on the Brigades' international connections once he is fully debriefed on the subject. Publicly, he described his captors only as "a bunch of dedicated people." For the moment, Administration officials are assuming that U.S. Government employees in Italy are still in danger from the Red Brigades. Says one American official: "We don't want to get creamed by the euphoric aftereffects of the rescue." Though extra security has been thrown around the U.S. embassy in anticipation of terrorist reprisals for last week's dramatic bust, U.S. officials seem philosophical about living with renewed threats. Among them is James Dozier, who last week told reporters that he was "proud of my assignment at NATO"—and obviously more than ready to get back to his office in Verona.

—By Russ Hoyle. Reported by Barry Kalb/Vicenza and Wilton Wynn/Rome